

Today's News - Thursday, January 22, 2015

- Ferro delves into the demise of Architecture For Humanity: Where it "went wrong, and where volunteers hope to take it now" (a sad, but hopeful tale).
- A "scathing report lifts the lid on Australia's building energy performance sham."
- Wainwright wends his way through Beirut's "glitzy" but "strangely deserted" downtown (an architectural petting zoo if ever there was one), and delves deep "beneath the veneer of waterfront sparkle" to find it "might not all be quite what it seems" (a fabulous read!).
- Russell on Nouvel vs. Philharmonie de Paris: "However petulant it sounded, his outburst matters - pushing back against the ingrained assumption that cost overruns are always the fault of the architect. The hopefully delicious irony in this turn of events is that us media types are forced to halt our usual rush to judgment."
- Speaking of critics vs. critics vs. architects: Johnson, Brownell, Brussat, and Altabe each offer thoughtful takes on the Betsky/Bingler/Pedersen/Shubow/Hosey debate (all well worth reading!).
- King calls out six examples of "standout architecture: the fabulous and the flops" in San Francisco.
- Anderton's Q&A with Mayne and Alison-Mayne re: their plans for the Ray Bradbury home site "that might have piqued the late futurist's interest," and "their response to the furor" over its demolition.
- Mallonee looks at what's being lost in Holl's plan for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston expansion.
- An in-depth (and fascinating) look at the Cooper Hewitt Labs, "A Thing That Puts Things on the Internet" that is "an investment in a particular idea of cultural democracy" (fear not - the museum "will forever be committed to its stuff").
- Bernstein takes a look at how some major museums are dealing with their "entrance problems."
- Mystic Seaport in Connecticut is getting a new museum that is a modern design by Centerbrook Architects that "will blend seamlessly with the 19th-century flavor."
- Hopes are high that the Stockholm Public Library's second try to modernize will go better than the first by tapping Caruso St John to renovate Asplund's landmark.
- Bullivant cheers SelgasCano's Second Home in London, a "gloriously porous cultural hub" (it bodes well for this year's Serpentine Pavilion).
- An impressive list of finalists in AJ's 2015 Women in Architecture Awards and Emerging Woman Architect of the Year awards (great presentation, too).
- Five impressive design teams shortlisted in Toronto's Jack Layton Ferry Terminal and Harbour Square Park Design Competition.
- Call for entries: 1st Annual Dencity Competition for new ideas on how to better handle the growing density of unplanned cities.

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What's Next For Architecture For Humanity? Where the architecture nonprofit went wrong, and where volunteers hope to take it now: ...the organization's mission to bring better design to the underserved will likely survive through its wide network of volunteers... "it seems that most chapters are ignited in continuing our work"... By Shaunacy Ferro -- Cameron Sinclair; Kate Stohr - Fast Company / Co. Design

Explosive report lifts the lid on Australia's building energy performance sham: There's "a pervasive culture of mediocre energy performance across the Australian building industry", according to a scathing report the government has been sitting on for months. - The Fifth Estate (Australia)

Is Beirut's glitzy downtown redevelopment all that it seems? Two decades after civil war blew the Lebanese capital to rubble, the city centre boasts immaculately rebuilt streets...but the whole place is strangely deserted...beneath the veneer of waterfront sparkle, this optimistic image of Beirut's glory days...might not all be quite what it seems. By Oliver Wainwright -- Solidere; Steven Holl; Angus Gavin; Rafael Moneo/Kevin Dash; Zaha Hadid; Peter Marino; Giancarlo de Carlo; Robert Adam; Dimitri Porphyrios; Arata Isozaki; Ricardo Bofill; Richard Rogers; Fumihiko Maki; Bernard Khoury; Foster + Partners; Herzog & de Meuron; Jean Nouvel; Renzo Piano [images]- Guardian (UK)

Why Did Nouvel Whine While Paris Mourned? ...played the part of the preening superstar...However petulant it sounded, though, his outburst matters...pushing back against the ingrained assumption that cost overruns are always the fault of the architect...Early reviews [of Philharmonie de Paris]...have fallen just short of rapturous...The hopefully delicious irony in this turn of events is that us media types, if we're honest, are forced to halt our usual rush to judgement... By James S. Russell- JamesSRussell.net

Architecture Doesn't Need Rebuilding, It Needs More Thoughtful Critics: ...reactionary commentators...denounce what they see as the currently negative direction of contemporary architecture...rebustals...have been ham-handed and poorly argued...our system has tended to promote showy, trite, formal design over architecture of substance...We've allowed amoral, formally bombastic practices to define our discipline to the public... By Matthew Johnson/LOJO: Logan and Johnson Architecture -- Steven Bingler; Martin C. Pedersen; Aaron Betsky; Justin Shubow [images]- ArchDaily

The Disruptive Nature of Architectural Innovation: Three pre-21st century buildings offer up lessons on how public opinion can evolve to accept once-novel uses of material and form...architects don't always get it right...Departures from conventional practice may not be received favorably by all audiences, but that is a small price to pay for innovation. By Blaine Brownell -- Steven Bingler; Martin C. Pedersen [images]- Architect Magazine

A few words about breasts: Actually about the twin peaks of innovation and experimentation in architecture: ...what is conventional in design today is the use of the unconventional to stir emotion – often negative emotion, and purposely so...Brownell uses several predictable formulations to bamboozle readers into buying his argument...[his] critique is, at base, identical to the more heated arm-flapping of Aaron Betsky. By David Brussat- Architecture Here and There

The beau ideal of modern architecture is neither beau nor ideal: "Failures of Architecture Criticism" called to me over my disgust with fellow critics' raves for awful buildings. The article...by Lance Hosey, had me nodding in agreement, as far as it went. It just didn't go far enough...What shall we do with these know-it-all architects and the critics who spur them on? By Joan Altabe- Examiner

Standout architecture: the fabulous and the flops: 3 that work; 3 that don't. By John King -- Herzog & de Meuron/Fog and Chan Architects (2005); Renzo Piano/Stantec Architecture (2008); Lawrence Halprin (1982); Morphosis/SmithGroup (2007); Richard Meier & Partners/Steinberg Architects (2005) [images]- San Francisco Chronicle

DnA/Frances Anderton: Thom Mayne Shares His Plans For "Next Generation Case Study" on the Bradbury Site: ...it turns out they have plans for the site that might have piqued the late futurist's interest...their response to the furor at the destruction of the house, as well as what they plan to build on the site. -- Morphosis- KCRW (Los Angeles)

Houston Museum Expansion Wipes Out Local Architect's Legacy: ...Museum of Fine Arts, Houston...addition will freshen the cityscape, though it comes at the expense of Seth Irvin Morris's already-dwindling legacy... By Laura C.

Mallonee -- Steven Holl Architects; Lake|Flato Architects [images]- Hyperallergic

The Museum of the Future Is Here: Some things belong in a museum. But at the Smithsonian's recently reopened museum of design, a team has been rethinking what a thing is in the first place. Cooper Hewitt Labs...Somewhere between a media and a tech firm...A Thing That Puts Things on the Internet...The museum will forever be committed to its stuff...The Labs's work...is an investment in a particular idea of cultural democracy. By Robinson Meyer [images, links]- The Atlantic

Major Museums Making Grand Entrances: The Metropolitan Museum of Art has an entrance problem...The Louvre...also has an entrance problem. By Fred A. Bernstein -- Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates (1980s); I.M. Pei (1989); Agence Search; Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Studio Gang Architects - Architectural Record

Mystic Seaport Breaks Ground on New Exhibit Building: Modern architecture and design will blend seamlessly with the 19th-century flavor...will evoke the spirit of ship building and the sea. -- Centerbrook Architects and Planners; Kent + Frost Landscape Architecture [images]- WNPR News (Connecticut)

Caruso St John Appointed to Renovate Gunnar Asplund's Stockholm Public Library: ...there will be no alterations to the external appearance of the building...the second attempt to modernize the library in a decade...In 2007...Heike Hanada was selected for a more dramatic extension...met heavy criticism...- ArchDaily

Second Home: ...a new type of workspace-cum-club for digital age entrepreneurs...a gloriously porous cultural hub...Everything is geared towards a more experiential, yet rational resolution...There is also a strong artisanal thread running through the building... By Lucy Bullivant -- SelgasCano [images]- The Plan Magazine (Italy)

Revealed: finalists in 2015 Women in Architecture Awards and the Emerging Woman Architect of the Year awards. - Joanna Bacon/Allies and Morrison; Teresa Borsuk/Pollard Thomas Edwards; Rachel Haugh/Simpson Haugh and Partners; Gonca Pasolar/Emre Arolat Architects; Carme Pinós/Estudio Carme Pinós; Cristina Segni/Foster + Partners; Clare Wright/Wright & Wright; etc. [images]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Five design teams shortlisted for Jack Layton Ferry Terminal and Harbour Square Park Design Competition: ...occupies prime waterfront space at the end of two of Toronto's most important streets... -- Clement Blanchet Architecture/Battle I Roig/RVTR; Diller Scofidio + Renfro/architectsAlliance; KPMB Architects/West 8/Greenberg Consultants; Quadrangle Architects/aLLDesign/Janet Rosenberg & Studio; Stoss Landscape Urbanism/nARCHITECTS/ZAS Architects - Canadian Architect

Call for entries: 1st Annual Dencity Competition: new ideas on how to better handle the growing density of unplanned cities; cash prizes; deadline: March 15 (submissions due April 20)- Shelter



-- "Friedensreich Hundertwasser - 1928-2000" by Wieland Schmied: an inspirational portrait of one of the most prolific artists of the 20th century....his sustainable principles are highly compelling and should warrant consideration by architects today.

-- What's On? Architectural Exhibitions, January 2015 edition: Russian avant-garde, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin; Studio Mumbai, Bordeaux; Highrise City Frankfurt, DAM; "Architecture in Uniform," MAXXI, Rome; National Building Museum, Washington, DC; "After Hurricane Sandy - Rebuild by Design," Aedes am Pfefferberg, Berlin

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